



Howard County Council

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COUNCILMEMBERS

Courtney Watson, Chairperson
District 1
Mary Kay Sigaty, Vice Chairperson
District 4
Calvin Ball
District 2
Greg Fox
District 5
Jennifer Terrasa
District 3

Minutes (approved, 6/2/08)
County Council Meeting to Receive the PELU Report and
Legislative Work Session
May 27, 2008

The meeting was called to order at 3:38 p.m. in the Tyson Room.

Members present: Calvin Ball, Greg Fox (arrived at 3:41), Mary Kay Sigaty, Jennifer Terrasa, Courtney Watson

Presentation of the Report of the Public Engagement in Land Use (PELU) Task Force:

PELU Task Force co-chairs Bill Erskine, developer representative, and James Howard, resident representative, described the Task Force's process for undertaking their study. Three subgroups were formed: 1) general plan, 2) piecemeal map amendments, 3) everything else. Mr. Howard explained that the Task Force thought it would be helpful to have a report from the Council or staff to the Task Force to let them know which recommendations were implemented.

A discussion and questions followed.

Ms. Watson and Ms. Sigaty thanked task force members and acknowledged their efforts. Ms. Sigaty noted that the recommendations on which there was consensus agreement would seem to be a good place to start.

Ms. Terrasa asked for clarification about recommendations that were not recommended. Mr. Howard affirmed that these recommendations were rejected by the majority of the members of the Task Force.

Ms. Watson noted that the great majority of recommendations having consensus agreement fall within the purview of the Executive to implement. She urged Ms. Sigaty and Ms. Terrasa, sponsors of the resolution creating the task force, to encourage the Administration to implement these.

Mr. Ball noted that the some recommendations were conditioned on their "economic feasibility" while others were not. He stressed that cost is an important consideration. There was discussion about the economic feasibility or lack of it that accompanies some of the recommendations. The

Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) already has begun implementing some of the recommendations.

Ms. Sigaty offered to work with DPZ to develop a plan of action for implementation of recommendations deemed feasible. She and Ms. Terrasa will get back to the Council in September with a sense of priorities from their review of the recommendations.

Mr. Erskine thanked the members of the task force and Angie Beltram and Grace Kubovcik, who attended regularly and provided important expertise and input, although they were not members.

The meeting was recessed at 4:29 p.m. and reconvened at 4:39 p.m., for the Legislative Work Session.

Art Griffin, Senior Administrative Analyst in the Office of Human Resources, explained the changes proposed in Council Bills 33, 34, and 35. He also noted pay plan changes made in CB 44, which was passed on May 22 with the budget.

The Council discussed CB 39, Route 1 revitalization, particularly the advancement of housing allocations. Marsha McLaughlin, Director of the Department of Planning and Zoning, Joel Gallihue and Ken Roey, Howard County Public School System, joined the discussion. Ms. McLaughlin explained that the purpose of the legislation is to permit some residential (townhouse and apartment) development to fill in between “pioneer” commercial or mixed use projects that will revitalize the Route 1 corridor. She said that the Administration is open to looking at ways to narrow the options in the Elkridge area. Mr. Fox and other expressed the concern that all advanced allocations could go to one planning region under the current language.

She noted immediate interest in the Savage transit-oriented site for which the county is exploring tax-incremental financing (TIF). The TIF depends upon attaining increased tax revenues, which then are pledged to pay off infrastructure improvements (a garage in this case). If residential development is phased under the current law, the revenues won’t grow fast enough to produce sufficient revenue growth to pay off the bonds.

A second project of interest is the former Aladin mobile home park. The park is closed and most residents have moved, but the developer can’t get financing for the commercial component of the park if the residential development is spread out over a long period. There are two other sites that may need advanced allocations, one north of Furnace Inn and the other on the south side of Furnace Avenue.

Mr. Gallihue said that the school system doesn’t have a position on the legislation. They have modeled the effect on elementary and middle school enrollments and believe that advancing housing allocations may accelerate the projected growth in school population in the Elkridge area by one year. He noted that Bellows Springs, Elkridge Elementary, Rockburn, Laurel Woods, Ilchester, Deep Run, Bollman Bridge, and Hammond Elementary could be affected. The model under current allocations suggests a need for one to two more elementary schools and one middle school by the late teens. He noted the need to begin efforts to acquire sites for these schools.

Ray Wacks, Director of the Budget Office, joined the discussion. He compared projected bond affordability to expected school funding requests.

Ms. Sigaty proposed the possibility of allocating extra housing allocations to specific projects, using the language in APFO allowing the Council to modify APFO for economic development purposes. This may prevent authorizing the broader change.

There was discussion of the possibility of tabling the legislation. Ms. McLaughlin noted that the open/closed chart needs to conform to the housing allocation chart. She suggested the possibility of limiting the total number of allocations that could be brought forward. She also suggested the possibility of adding a sunset provision, as the expectation is that this issue will be studied as part of the General Plan discussion.

Ms. Terrasa said that she would like to look at the possibility of advancing infrastructure. She also proposed an amendment to clarify that the APFO tests will still need to be met.

Ms. Watson invited Ms. McLaughlin to suggest amendments. Mr. Ball and Ms. Sigaty were prepared to table the bill, if concerns can't be addressed before the voting session.

Ray Wacks and Jim Irvin discussed Council Resolutions 39 and 40 and the feasibility of the Meridian Square project going forward, given the agreements reached in the budget process. Mr. Irvin said that he did not have a response from the developer to the conditions agreed to by the council and Administration in the budget process. He said that the contingency plan, if the purchase of the condo space does not advance, is to rent space or to work this into the space plan.

Mr. Fox asked if the Administration would be interested in retaining the Rogers Ave. property if the Meridian project does not advance. Mr. Irvin replied that the revenue from that sale is needed to renovate existing space. Mr. Wacks added that the spending for Meridian would be a year from now in any event, at the time the project is completed.

Ms. Watson asked how the Administration would ensure that the road (and extension of Ridge Road) is built on the Rogers Avenue property. Mr. Irvin said that the county would negotiate with the purchaser, but would develop the road itself, if that were necessary. He concurred that the road has to be built. He would not have a problem with language requiring the road to be built as long as it leaves flexibility about how and by whom it would be constructed.

Marsha McLaughlin and Steve Lafferty, Deputy Director, Planning and Zoning, discussed Council Bills 25 and 24. While the Administration has no problem with proposed amendments, they think the transit amendment proposed by Mr. Ball is unnecessary. They also are concerned about the timing of the exclusion of petitions presented before September 2. The Department won't know how a projects fits on a site until they get the plan, which is later in the process. Mr. Ball said he is flexible on the details, but wants to avoid penalizing people whose projects are in the pipeline.

The Council discussed CB 27 (ZRA 88). Ms. McLaughlin expressed reservations about rezoning the properties through a ZRA. She expressed a preference for using the rezoning process to accomplish changes in specific sites to avoid the possibility of creating problems with other properties.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:29 p.m.

Submitted by: Sheila Tolliver

5/28/08/08

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